

University of Groningen

Knowing what counts

Baack, Stefan

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Document Version

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:

2018

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Baack, S. (2018). *Knowing what counts: How journalists and civic technologists use and imagine data*. [Groningen]: University of Groningen.

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Propositions

Knowing what counts

Stefan Baack

1.

To understand how data affects democratic visions and practices, we need to ask who is driving the expanded usage of data and in what ways.

2.

What data affords to whom is historically and culturally situated. Accordingly, data journalists and data activists in the open data and civic tech movements imagine and promote particular visions and practices of what data is for, and how it can and should be used.

3.

Data journalists and data activists are pioneer communities whose practices and visions around data provide orientation for other civil society and journalism actors.

4.

Data journalists and data activists engage in complementary practices. Both use data to facilitate their audience to take actions themselves (e.g. by providing research tools), and to highlight relevant issues via gatekeeping ('journalistic' storytelling).

5.

Civic technologists can be theorized as 'facilitators' as they aim to facilitate the public in its use of public services and in its claiming of rights. They want to make the outcomes of political decision-making-processes more representative without influencing what those outcomes are.

6.

There is not *one* form of ‘data journalism’. It includes a variety of practices that combine facilitating and gatekeeping in different ways.

7.

Data journalists and data activists build on earlier traditions of journalism and activism, but they realize and combine the practices and values inherent in those traditions in new ways with data.

8.

To study the implications of datafication, media and journalism studies need to pay more attention to how a growing reliance on data is connected to new, emerging communities across institutional and organizational backgrounds.

9.

“Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion.” (Cyril Northcote Parkinson)

10.

When it comes to careers paths, academia clearly favors flexible singles.